

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 27, 2003 (Paper No. 11). Claims 1 to 80 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 31, 61, 62, 64 to 68 and 74-80 are independent. Claims 1 to 80 are being amended herein. Claims 81 and 82 are being cancelled. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Initially and with respect to the objections to the specification and claims raised in the Office Action, Applicants have amended the specification, and have amended the claims, as deemed appropriate. With respect to the objection to Claims 2 to 30, 32 to 60, 63 and 69 to 73, it is not believed that the amendment suggested in the Office Action, to change the word "A" to "The", is necessary. More particularly, such an amendment is not seen to be necessary to improve the clarity of the claims. Further, it is submitted that Applicants are entitled to a degree of latitude in the manner of expression used in the claims. See MPEP 2173.02. With respect to the rejection of Claims 5, 8, 17, 18, 26, 29, 30, 38, 47, 48 and 56 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have amended the claims as deemed appropriate. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and § 112, second paragraph claim rejections are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication in the Office Action that Claims 68 to 73, 75, 77 and 79 to 82 contain allowable subject matter. While these claims are being amended herein, it is not believed that the amendments affect the indication of allowability. Accordingly, these claims are believed to continue to recite allowable subject matter.

By the Office Action, Claims 1 to 7, 9, 12 to 16, 19, 20, 23, 31 to 35, 37, 39, 42 to 46, 49, 50, 53, 61 to 67, 74, 76 and 78 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 5,526,428 (Arnold).

Without conceding the correctness of the rejection, independent Claims 1, 31, 61, 62, 64 to 67, 74, 76 and 78 have been amended to recite the same or substantially similar features as in allowable Claim 81, or Claim 82, which is a system claim corresponding to Claim 81.

Therefore, Claims 1, 31, 61, 62, 64 to 67, 74, 76 and 78 are believed to be in condition for allowance. The remaining claims are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 39,000

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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